We claim:

1   1.   A method for providing status information from multiple information servers, the method

2 comprising:

3   receiving a request for status information from the multiple information servers;

4   acquiring status information from each of the multiple information servers; and

5   rendering status images related to the status information received from each of the

6 multiple information servers, wherein the rendering of any one of the status images is not

7 affected by any delay in acquiring status information from any one of the other multiple

8 information servers.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   displaying the rendered status images in a Web page, wherein the rendered status images

3 are displayed as soon as they are individually rendered without regard to whether any one of the

4 other status images are rendered.

1   3.   The method of claim 1, wherein a temporary status image is provided for status images

2 which are delayed in rendering.

1   4.   The method of claim 1, wherein receiving a request for status information from the

2 multiple information servers includes receiving login information related to one or more of the

3 multiple information servers.

1   5.   The method of claim 4, wherein the login information is an electronic mail login name

2 and password.

1   6.   The method of claim 1, wherein one or more of the multiple information servers is an

2 electronic mail server.

1   7.   The method of claim 1, wherein acquiring status information from each of the multiple

2 information servers is performed on a periodic basis.

1   8.   The method of claim 1, wherein the status images may be in any one of the following

2   formats including GIF, JPEG, and MPEG.

1   9.   The method of claim 1, wherein the request for status information identifies a server side

2   CGI script which renders the status images.

1   10.   A method for providing and displaying information received from multiple information

2   provider sources, the method comprising:

3   providing a status indicator for each of the multiple information provider sources which

4   includes:

5   receiving status information from each of the multiple information provider

6   sources; and

7   generating an image for each of the multiple information sources, wherein each

8   respective image contains status information from each of the multiple information

9   sources, wherein each image is generated without regard to whether any one or more of

10   the multiple information sources is delayed in providing status information.

1   11.   The method of claim 10, wherein the status information is determined on an ad hoc basis.

1   12.   The method of claim 10, wherein the status indicator for each of the multiple information

2   provider sources is a GIF image.

1   13.   The method of claim 10, wherein the multiple information provider sources are Web

2   servers.

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1   14.   A method for providing a visual representation of information collected from a variety of

2   information sources for display in a single Web page, the method comprising:.

3   receiving a request for information from a plurality of information sources;

4   processing the request for information from the plurality of information sources; and

5   displaying the information from each of the plurality of information sources, wherein the

6   information is displayed in a plurality of status images, each of which represent a single

7   information source.

1   15.   The method of claim 14, wherein the request for information is an HTTP request.

1   16.   The method of claim 14, wherein processing the request for information from the

2   plurality of information sources includes separately accessing each of the plurality of information

3   sources to acquire the requested information from each of the plurality of information sources.

1   17.   The method of claim 14, wherein the status images are one of GIF, JPG, and MPEG

2   image files.

1   18.   The method of claim 14, wherein the status images are updated automatically with new

2   information as provided by each of the plurality of information sources.

1   19.   The method of claim 14, wherein each status image is displayed independently of each of

2   the other status images whereby the display of the Web page is unaffected by a delay in

3   displaying one or more status images.

1   20.   The method of claim 14, wherein processing the request for information from the

2   plurality of information sources includes rendering an individual status image related to a single

3   information source.